

Group I, claims 1-5 and 11-13, drawn to a method for stimulating liver regeneration in a subject having a liver disorder comprising administering of bone marrow cells, including bone marrow cells that are genetically engineered to express a functionally active protein, to said subject in an amount sufficient to result in the production of hepatocytes, bile ductal cells and/or oval cells;

Group II, claims 6-10, 11-12, 14 and 20-24, drawn to a method for stimulating liver regeneration in a subject have a liver disorder comprising the administration of enriched oval cells, including enriched oval cells that are genetically engineered to express a functionally active protein, to a subject in an amount sufficient to result in the production of hepatocytes, bile ductal cells and/or oval cells; a method for enriching for oval cells and a composition comprising an enriched population of oval cells; and

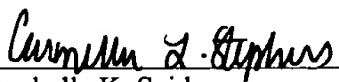
Group III, claims 15-19, drawn to a method for stimulating pancreatic regeneration in a subject having a pancreatic disorder comprising administering of bone marrow cells, including bone marrow cells that are genetically engineered to express a functionally active protein, to said subject in an amount sufficient to result in the production of pancreatic cells.

The Examiner alleges that the inventions listed as Groups I-III do not relate to a single general inventive concept because they lack the same or corresponding special technical

features. Specifically, the Examiner maintains that the method of each Group is materially different and plurally independent from the method of any other Group because each is practiced with materially different process steps. For example, a method for stimulating liver regeneration in a subject having a liver disorder using an effective amount of bone marrow cells of Group I, a method for stimulating liver regeneration in a subject having a liver disorder using an effective amount of enriched oval cells of Group II, and a method for stimulating pancreatic regeneration in a subject having a pancreatic disorder using an effective amount of bone marrow cells of Group III, are materially different methods which require different technical considerations, reagents or starting materials and endpoints to achieve different goals. Because the process steps do not share the same or a corresponding technical feature, unity of invention is lacking. The Examiner alleges that it would be unduly burdensome for the examiner to search and/or consider the patentability of all of the inventions in a single patent application.

Although the requirement for restriction is respectfully traversed, in order to be fully responsive to the requirement for restriction, Applicants elect the claimed method for stimulating pancreatic regeneration in a subject of Group III. Withdrawal of the requirement for restriction and favorable consideration and allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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